

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising:

associating a plurality of priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal;

providing a priority code to a calling party based on a desired priority level for the calling party;

receiving a call from ~~a-~~the calling party who dialed the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving ~~a-~~the priority code ~~provided by~~ from the calling party;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party to interfere with the first communication session if the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

executing a default action if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

2. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party is a regular call waiting tone.

5. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the calling party does not provide any priority code.

6. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

providing a priority code to a calling party based on a desired priority level for the calling party;

receiving a call from ~~a~~the calling party dialing the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving ~~a~~the priority code ~~provided by~~ from the calling party;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party matches one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

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8. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein each priority alert signal assigned to each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different calling party.

9. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the calling party is provided by the subscriber with more than one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number.

10. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9, wherein each of the more than one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level.

11. (Currently Amended) A system for providing a priority call waiting alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the system comprising:  
switch in communication with the telephone line, wherein the switch is configured to detect incoming calls intended for the subscriber when the subscriber is already engaged in a first communication session with a third party, and  
a processor in communication with the switch, wherein the processor is configured to review information associated with the subscriber,  
wherein when the switch detects an incoming call intended for the subscriber from a calling party using a telephone number associated with the

telephone line while the subscriber is already engaged in the first communication session with the third party, the switch launches a query comprising a subscriber number of the subscriber,

wherein when the processor receives the query, the processor instructs the switch to solicit a priority code from the calling party without interfering with the first communication session,

wherein the priority code was previously provided to the calling party by the subscriber based on a desired priority level for the calling party,

wherein the processor instructs the switch to interrupt the first communication session with a priority alert signal if a priority code provided by the calling party is recognized by the processor to be one of a plurality of priority codes previously associated with the telephone number, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal,

wherein the switch then suspends the first communication session, and establishes a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

12. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the switch is provisioned with a trigger.

13. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the switch is a service switching point and the processor is a service control point.

14. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the priority alert signal is a regular call waiting tone.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising:

associating two or more priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line in a database, wherein each of the two or more priority codes is associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal;

providing a priority code to a calling party based on a desired priority level for the calling party;

receiving a call from a the calling party at the telephone line while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving a the priority code from provided by the calling party;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the two or more priority codes associated with the telephone number;

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party to interfere with the first communication session between the subscriber and the third party; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

16. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of priority levels are associated with a plurality of priority alert signals, wherein each of the plurality of priority signals represents a different calling party.

17. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of priority levels are associated with a plurality of priority alert signals, wherein each of the plurality of priority alert signals represents a different level of priority or urgency.

18. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

19. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is one of several priority codes available to the calling party and wherein each of the several priority codes available to the calling party represents a different priority level.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes;   
providing a priority code to a calling party based on a desired priority level for the calling party;

receiving a call from a the calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving the priority code from the calling party;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party matches one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

21. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.
22. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the calling party is provided by the subscriber with more than one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number.
23. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein each of the more than one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level.
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